

HUDSON'S-BAY-COMPANY.

THE Kings of England, by Right of Discovery, and premier Occupancy, for above 100 Years since, have the sole Rightful Title and Sovereignty of all the Seas, Lakes, Bays, Rivers, Creeks, &c. as well as the Countries, Confines and Territories within the Entrance of the Straits of Hudson; and that the same was never Navigated but by English Ships and English Subjects, till the late Encroachments of the French, many Years since the Incorporation of this Company.

Though the Navigation was discovered so long since, yet no Trade was Established with the Native Indians till about Twenty Years past, when several Persons of Quality, and others, having made some private Voyages, and finding that a considerable Trade for *Beaver*, and other *Furs*, might be settled with the Savage Indians, His late Majesty King CHARLES the Second, was pleased by His Letters Patents bearing date the Second of May, 1670. to Incorporate the Adventurers; and in pursuance of the aforesaid Inherent Right in the Crown of England, did by His Royal Charter make a Free Grant to his Highness Prince Rupert, Christopher Duke of Albemarle, William Earl of Craven, and others His Subjects and their Successors for ever, of all those Seas, Straits, Bays, Rivers, Lakes and Creeks in whatsoever Latitude, from the Entrance of the Straits, commonly called *Hudson Straits*; together with all the Lands and Territories upon the Countries, Coasts and Confines, and that the same should be reckoned and reputed as one of His Majesties Plantations and Colonies in America, by the Name of *Rupert's Land*. And did further Make and Constitute the said Company and their Successors, the True and Absolute Lords and Proprietors thereof, to hold in free and common Socage, as of His Mannor of *East-Greenwich* in Kent, reserving an Acknowledgment or Rent for the same to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors; and Granting to the said Company the sole Trade thereof, with Prohibition to all others from Trading within their Limits, without their License, upon Forfeiture of Ship and Goods so offending, which hath also by Proclamation been published and made known: By which Inherent Right of Dominion and Propriety in His Majesty to the Country and Places, it is humbly conceived His Majesties said Grant doth extremely differ from His Charters to the *East-India-Company*, or the *African-Company*.

The said Company since their Incorporation have Erected Forts, Settled several Factories, Built Ships, Employed many Seamen, and considerably Exported the Manufactures of this Nation; and in the course of their Trade for so many Years, have not only actually lost Thirteen Ships, but been at above Two Hundred Thousand Pounds Charge: Which makes it evident that nothing but a Company and a *Joint Stock* could have laid the Foundation of so considerable a Trade amongst *Infidels*, and have been able to support so great a Charge, and so many incident Losses which naturally attend that Voyage.

In particular, this Company hath suffered more by the French than any Company in England, the French having even in time of Peace committed many Outrages against them, taken their Ships at Sea, Invaded their Factories by Land, Robbed them of their Goods, Burnt their Houses, Murdered several of Their Majesties Subjects, and carried others Prisoners to *Quebeck*: That the French have had the Insolence not only to justify those their unjust Invasions, but (according to the Method of that Nation to Encroach upon all the World) have pretended a Right to *Hudsons-Bay*, and by a strange Confidence against all English Discoveries of almost Two Hundred Years since, and all Maps that ever were extant, to make it a Dependence upon *Canada*, and to give out that in a short time they would not only have that, but *New York* and *New England* too: But this Company will undertake to make out, That the Crown of France hath no Right to *Canada* it self, but that it, and some other Territories, were not only many Years in the English Possession, but that it is unjustly detained by the French, upon pretext of Terms and Conditions (according to the Faith of that Nation) never performed to this Day.

Some particular Men of our own Nation also, who have disturbed this Company in their Trade, and disputed the Powers of their Grant and Charter, have never attained any Benefit to themselves, but either given Advantage to the French, or perished in the Voyage, which is extrem hazardous through the Mountains of Ice which must be passed; as about Eighteen Months since the Companies Ships sailing in *Hudsons-Bay*, met an English Ship Interloping there, and in distress in the Ice just ready to sink, the Companies Ship seasonably (by GOD's Providence) saved all the Mens Lives, and the Ship sunk immediately. Nor is the *Beaver* Trade to be Maintained or Improved by a single or sudden Voyage of any Undertaker, but by the publick Charge of Fortified Forts and Established Factories to abide there, with a constant Correspondency with the Indians, that they may be assured where settled Factories are, to resort to at the time of Year, to Trade with for their *Beaver*.

All which Extraordinary Losses sustained from the French, and incurred by the Natural Hazard of the Voyage to and from such a Climate, is the more largely insisted upon, to Demonstrate, that this Trade (which Twenty Years ago was not one Penny Benefit to this Kingdom, and is now above Twenty Thousand Pounds per Annum Advantage) could never have been well begun, nor effectually prosecuted, but by a Company in a *Joint Stock*; and all the Undertakings by single Persons, (who would have regarded their several and distinct Interests) must have been rendered fruitless, through the many Disasters and Losses which would have befallen most of them, if not all, it being impracticable to raise any considerable Trade in a remote Country, amongst Savage Indians, without Forts and Factories erected and settled amongst them, and furnished with store of all Trading Goods for their constant supply; and more especially against those Potent Rivals the French, who manage that particular Trade of *Beaver* under the Counsels of the *Jesuits*, to whom it is Granted by the French King.

All which is humbly submitted to this Honourable House.

[c. 1690].